

# Transport Central



**The Railsplitter Returns**



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## ■ COLUMN ONE

"NOW WE ARE FOUR"

Four years ago next week TRANSPORT CENTRAL began publication. I can well remember those hectic first days, not only putting our first edition together, but afterward, when initial distribution had been completed, and I was anxiously scanning each day's mail to see if any subscription orders had come in.

In the first seven days, four readers were added to the TC family and mercifully the total has climbed well ever since. More and more readers are "discovering" TC (until recently, we relied almost entirely on word-of-mouth advertising) and, most importantly, staying with us at renewal time (Our renewal rate averages well over 95%, which, needless to say, makes us very happy.).

So it is apparent that after four years on the job we are pleasing our subscribers. I was reminded of this fact the other day when, in a conversation with one of our readers, the subject of TC's editorials came up. We have been editorializing at sometimes exasperating length of late, taking a firm position on one or another critical matter, and in view of this partisanship, my telephone mate inquired as to why we had not printed any rebuttals to these editorials in the interest of fairness.

I had to reply that we had not printed any rebuttals because there weren't any; save for Mr. Hurd's strong letter on the subject of the controversial publication of the transit management handbook some months ago, no mail critical of any TC stand has reached this desk.

On the one hand, perhaps no one reads our editorials. This hardly seems likely because TC is much quoted at least here in Chicago and, I understand, also within the labyrinthine confines of government in Washington. Apparently our message is being heard.

On the other hand, perhaps no one has taken issue with our editorial opinions because they meet with universal agreement among our readers. This explanation has rather frightening connotations because (a) either our columnists are all-knowing oracles or, perish the thought (b) our readers all think alike and you know what that means...

All kidding aside (and please forgive a bit of editorial whimsy on the occasion of a happy anniversary, we have gradually increased our commentary within the past months, believing that a journal can only be responsible to its readers if it stimulates the intellectual processes of the reader, as well as his memory banks.

As we go into our fifth year, then, we eagerly await your response to the gradual evolution of TRANSPORT CENTRAL. It is an unending process, for if we are to continue to grow in circulation, we must also continue to grow in quality, scope and responsibility. We thank you, dear readers, for your support in these past years, and hope to remain worthy of it.

--RICHARD R. KUNZ

TO THE EDITOR:



## METRO MEMO

### "FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET"

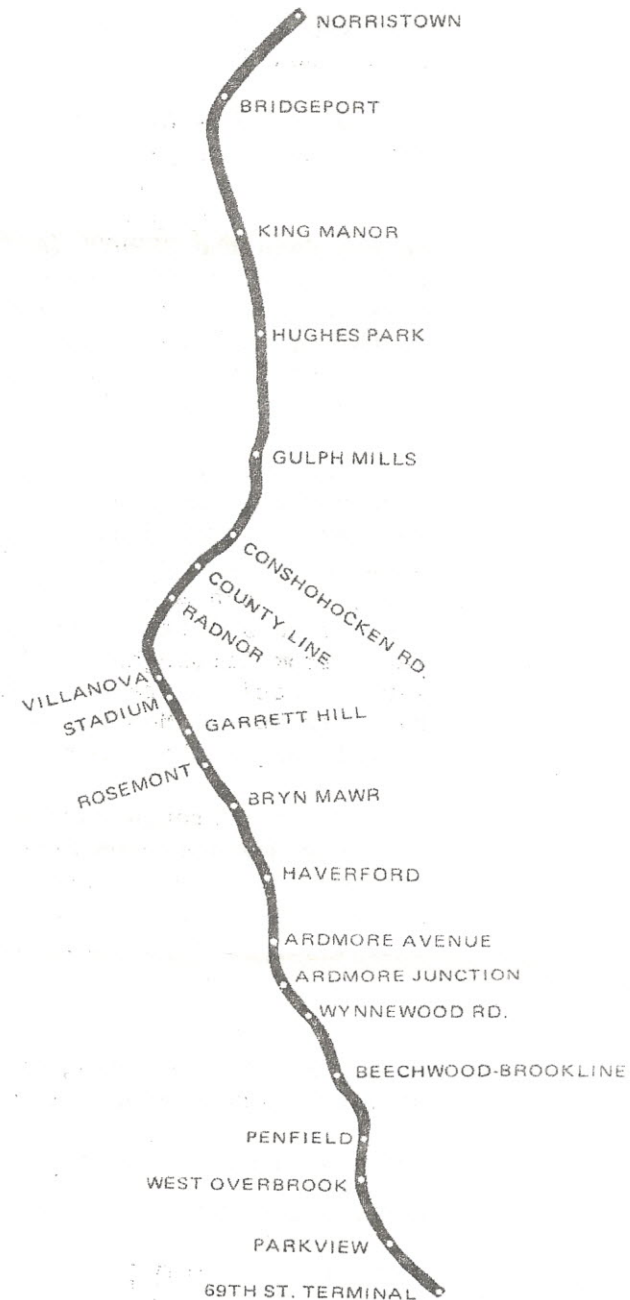
■ New scheduling will qualify SEPTA Red Arrow Division's Norristown High Speed Line as the fastest suburban rapid transit line in the world, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority chairman James C. McConnon has announced.

Under a completely revised schedule on the line, the fastest train now covers in 19 minutes the 13.5 mile route between Norristown and 69th Street Terminal, a 34 per cent improvement over the previous schedule. In comparison, the fastest Lindenwold High-Speed line express trains make their 14.2 mile run in 21 minutes and the Skokie Swift covers 5 miles in 6½ minutes; the latter line, however, makes no intermediate stops, while trains on the other two call at several points in addition to their respective terminals. Average speed on the Norristown line with the advent of the new timecard is 42.9 mph; Lindenwold's average is 40.5 mph (both include stops).

In addition to establishing the new higher-speed schedule, Red Arrow has also increased the amount of service on the Norristown line during both morning and evening rush hours and on weekends; the new June 11 schedule assures nearly all riders a seat, even in rush hours. Three additional trains now leave 69th Street Terminal between 5:00 and 6:00 PM.

The most significant reduction in travel time occurs during the morning rush hour; the faster scheduled "Limiteds" leave Norristown for 69th Street at 7:03, 7:18, 7:33, 7:48 and 8:03 AM, connecting at the latter point with trains of the Market-Frankford elevated line.

McConnon said, "the remarkable thing about our new "Limiteds" is that we are using 40-year old interurban cars (the famed 1931 Brill "Bullet" units) on a line that was built in 1907. Despite this, we can provide faster service than any of the more modern suburban rapid transit lines, newly built at very high cost." With the advent of the new timecard, Norristown line patrons can reach center city quicker than via auto over the expressway.



## RETURN OF THE RAILSPLITTER

■ TC reader and longtime Springfield (IL) resident Malcolm McKean (who also supplied the cover photograph) reports that, at long last, the famed "Railsplitter" White-built open-top tour bus is again in service in his home city. Coach 300, which bore the same fleet number on predecessors Springfield City Lines and the Springfield Transportation Company, was built by White in Cleveland in 1946 (serial number 318956) as a conventional transit model 798 with manual transmission, and at some point was converted to sightseeing service (the unit is not original with Springfield, but may have come from Nashville or another United property, as STC was in the UTC "family").

Now the 300 is the property of the Springfield Mass Transit District (and is the only unit purchased from the private company, joining the SMTD fleet of New Look GM coaches and conventional ex-Cincinnati transit units). Out of service for several years ("awaiting parts"), the historic White now operates five days each week (Monday thru Friday) on a "Lincoln Shrine Tour" route passing by all points of interest in a city noted for its Lincolniana. The tour occupies the better part of an hour, and is run seven times daily, departing Lincoln's Home hourly from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Adult fare is \$1.00, and children over 12 pay 50¢.

## URBAN REPORT

■ As TC goes to press, the Illinois House has voted approval of a compromise bill that would at least temporarily alleviate the fiscal problems of the Chicago Transit Authority; some \$7,000,000 in immediate aid would be made available to the CTA to avert any fare increase (see editorial, TC 14 JUN 71). An additional \$12,000,000 in state funds (to be matched by \$9,500,000 in local money) will be forthcoming before June 1, 1972. The measure now must go to the state Senate for passage before the close of the session June 30; its chances are rated good, and the Governor will no doubt sign the bill. The legislation also provides for funding of other Illinois local carriers (including suburban railroads) and for the reinstitution of intercity rail services to state communities bypassed by AMTRAK, in addition to \$600,000,000 for highway and \$100,000 for airport construction.

■ A new local carrier is operating in the area around LaGrange, Illinois (a suburb to the west of Chicago). Replacing the original LaGrange-LaGrange Park Transit Company (dating from 1945) and a successor firm formed last year by a group of company drivers after the breakup of the parent company, Lindberg Transportation Company is operating several former LaGrange Transit buses over routes similar to those of the former operator...■ We have an unconfirmed report that transit service in Flint (MI), operated by an authority, has been discontinued; that city was the site of the federally-funded "Maxi-Cab" home to plant direct service, as well as conventional routes...■ Governor Rockefeller has signed three major transportation bills, providing for mass transit to Kennedy International Airport; the rebuilding of the West Side Highway, and the "reserving" of land in Newburgh for a jetport. The rapid transit line to JFK will be financed by the Port Authority (as well as a companion one to Newark Airport, on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River), with federal and state aid. The line, to cost \$210,000,000, will run from Penn Station along the main line of the Long Island to Rego Park in Queens, and from there along the LIR's abandoned Rockaway branch. It will have a link with the road's nerve center in Jamaica...■ Street railway operation in the Australian cities of Ballarat and Bendigo will cease this summer. Ballarat's trams



will be removed in two stages, on August 21 and September 4. Those in Bendigo will run their last on the latter date. Bendigo's tram operation is historic in that it still uses ex-Geelong single-truck Birneys, the last such service anywhere in the world. One of the Birneys is earmarked for a proposed museum-type operation along the scenic lake line in Ballarat; there is a long waiting-list for the other specimens (all Brill-built).

■ TC does not normally carry appeals for funds involving restoration projects in its columns, but one has crossed this desk that is especially unique, and deserves mention here. The National Trolleybus Association of England is soliciting funds for the purchase of sufficient overhead running wire to make possible running of its preserved equipment over a respectable length of museum line. The NTA's museum will boast over 50 vehicles in its collection, and will be the second such operating line in the world (following the Illinois Railway Museum at Union, which will get underway with its twin-wire service late this summer). As might be expected, running wire is particularly difficult to come by, since there is presently only one trolleybus operating system in all of Britain (Bradford); Tees-Side having been converted to motorbus operation in April. Contributions may be sent to: Line Engineer, National Trolleybus Association, 67 Weltmore Road, Luton, LU3, 2TN, England.

## RAILWAY REPORT

### THE SOUTHERN SERVES THE SOUTH

■ In a move designed to minimize its passenger losses, non-AMTRAK Southern Railway System restructured all of its passenger trains effective June 1. Premier trains continues to be the SOUTHERN CRESCENT, 1 and 2, operating daily between Washington and Birmingham, continuing tri-weekly to New Orleans, where its thru sleeper continues on AMTRAK's SUNSET to Los Angeles.

Numbers 3 and 4 are the Salisbury-Asheville remnants of the ASHEVILLE SPECIAL currently operating eastbound on Sunday/Wednesday/Friday and westbound on Monday/Thursday/Saturday. Effective June 25, the dome coach from Southern's subsidiary (and AMTRAK-joiner) Central of Georgia's now-defunct NANCY HANKS II will operate on this run, and the train will operate Sunday/Tuesday/Friday in both directions, connecting with the PIEDMONT at Salisbury (NC).

Numbers 5 and 6 are the PIEDMONT, retimed to operate by day between Atlanta and Washington (there is no northbound connection to New York). Equipment consists of coaches with food and bar service. Numbers 7 and 8 are Washington-Lynchburg (172.5 miles) remnants of the once-mighty BIRMINGHAM SPECIAL.

This will be Southern's passenger train lineup until 1973, at which time it may join AMTRAK. If it does, certainly only 1 and 2 will continue to operate. If it doesn't, these trains will continue until 1975, when Southern may petition them to the ICC under Section 13(a). *(Researched by TC Senior Editor Tom Kopriva).*

### AMTRAK ADDENDA

■ Reader Warren K. Miller comments: "In the interest of accuracy, your statement



on page seven of the 14 June issue concerning AMTRAK bus service from San Francisco to Oakland is in error. Service from the East Bay Terminal for AMTRAK to Oakland is provided by Greyhound Lines West; usually one Scenicruiser is used. Prior to AMTRAK, Greyhound provided service for the Southern Pacific trains between Oakland and San Francisco (to the SP Depot at Third and Townsend--ED), and the Santa Fe used its own buses from San Francisco and Oakland to Richmond."

■ The railroad brotherhoods have gone to court in an attempt to force AMTRAK to restore free passes to railroad workers and retirees. When AMTRAK began its operations May 1, it refused to honor employee passes, but instituted a program of half-rate orders instead. Understandably, the union members were upset.

Lawyer Herman Poul, who filed the suit on behalf of the brotherhoods, said that free passes have been a tradition since the start of railroading in the U.S., adding "the subject of pass privileges is an unwritten understanding and cannot be removed by the unilateral whims of AMTRAK officials." AMTRAK officials contend that passes are gifts and are not guaranteed by any contract with the unions.

■ Would you believe that Penn Central's bankruptcy is now a year old? Filed in the wee hours of Sunday morning, June 21, 1970, the petition represented the largest fiscal default in the history of American corporate finance... That litigation over New Haven's claims against PC has gotten more complex. The bankrupt road (New Haven, in this case) filed suit in a New Haven federal court for its share of PC's assets, including the super-valuable Park Avenue properties in Manhattan (TC 07 JUN 71), but Federal Judge John P. Fullam (who is overseeing the reorganization of the Penn Central under federal bankruptcy laws) ruled that he alone had the right to dispose of PC assets (including those formerly owned by the New Haven), and that no other court can order the PC trustees to pay out any monies without his express authorization.

■ AMTRAK will add stops at Kewanee (IL), Holdredge (NB) and Fort Morgan (CO) to its Chicago-Denver-San Francisco (CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR/DENVER ZEPHYR) service July 12. The three cities, now without any intercity rail service and all on the Burlington Northern (former CB&Q) line, will receive full stop service, rather than flag stop operation.

■ LABOR magazine reports that three AMTRAK officials are hardly "enthusiasts" for rail passenger service, according to NARP, as witness their quoted comments:

Burlington Northern chairman Louis W. Menk: *"We ought to let the intercity passenger train die an honorable death."*

Penn Central president William H. Moore: *"There is absolutely no future in this country for long distance passenger trains."*

Milwaukee Road chairman W. J. Quinn: *"We can no longer compete effectively for the passenger."*

Both LABOR and NARP fail to point out that the quotes in question were made long before the advent of AMTRAK, when it was obvious from an economic standpoint that the passenger train was indeed a millstone around management's neck, and that without some sort of assistance on a grand scale it could not continue to operate, especially in the face of heavy, governmentally-subsidized competition from other modes of travel. In fact, the prime cause of PC's bankruptcy was the road's overabundance of money-losing passenger runs that an unsympathetic ICC would not permit to disappear.



## AIRLINE ACTION

THE FRIENDLY SKIES GET FRIENDLIER--BUT ON THE OTHER HAND...

■ The air fare war heats up: A federal judge last week put a temporary end to one of the air world's bargains--Alitalia's low-priced youth fare between the U.S. and Italy. Judge Orrin Judd granted a temporary injunction restricting Alitalia from selling any more youth tickets, while refusing to order a similar injunction against the Italian carrier's transporting youths already holding such tickets despite an impassioned plea by the CAB for him to do so.

In recent weeks, Alitalia has been offering 11-26 year olds the opportunity of obtaining round trip tickets from New York, Philadelphia or Boston to Milan or Rome for \$199, or from Chicago for just \$60 more. The regular economy peak season fare is \$704 from Eastern Seaboard points to Rome and return, and \$790 from Chicago.

The CAB said this was the first such court action involving fares it had ever initiated against a foreign airline; it is powerless to prevent such changes, but can legally delay them for up to 30 days. Alitalia's tariff is the lowest to any European capital--Rome is one of the most distant such cities from the U.S.--and the per-mile cost is substantially lower than a similar tariff across the country. With that in mind, industry observers predict that the spate of fare reductions instituted in the past several weeks (see Chicago DAILY NEWS chart above) that are certain to be the subject of discussion at the IATA conference in Montreal next week will lead to similar reductions in domestic tariffs. American has petitioned for lower mainland-Hawaii fares, and Aeronaves de Mexico has halved youth fares over its route network.

## THE SUPERSONIC PUSSYCAT

■ Wisconsin Democratic Senator William Proxmire noted last week that the government spent \$12,872 to publish a children's booklet called "The Supersonic Pussycat" to extol the virtues of the supersonic transport. 50,000 copies were printed, and the title character was a lucky pet "who gets to fly to Paris in 2½ hours."

## AIRLINE ADDENDA

■ Eastern will restore on-board ticketing on its New York/Newark/Washington/Boston shuttle flights--and eliminate beverage service...■ American, TWA and United have reached agreement on a plan to cut competitive flights by as much as 29 per cent.

## Samples of current fares

Following are samples of North Atlantic-route airline roundtrip fares in this peak (approximately summer) season:

One-way air Mileage	Chicago to	Youth fare	Student fare	Regular Economy (up to 1 year)
3,582	Shannon, Ireland	---	\$319	\$594
3,950	London	\$275	\$319	\$638
4,133	Paris	\$285	---	\$682
4,151	Brussels	*\$285	---	\$682
4,279	Stockholm	\$298	---	\$782
4,332	Frankfurt	\$298	---	\$772
4,454	Zurich	\$250	---	\$722
4,808	Rome	\$259	---	\$790
5,446	Athens	\$338	---	\$924

Each fare is plus \$3 U.S. tax.

\*Pan Am's rate. Sabena offers 12-25 youth fare and 12-29 students fare of \$220 originating in New York. No Chicago service.

"Youths" are persons ages 15 through 25 on routes to England, Scotland and Scandinavia and the Netherlands and ages 12 through 28 in Greece.

"Students" are fulltime enrollees in bona fide educational institutions. They must be 15 through 25 years old to qualify for the special rate to Shannon and Dublin Ireland, and 12 to 14 years old (that's right) for Pan Am's student rate to London.